

13 MAR 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the Director for
National Security Affairs

The attached, developed by [redacted] and his
colleagues, are some thoughts on the subject of Iraq and
Southern Arabia. If you have a generally positive reaction,
we could refine these further in the 40 Committee context.

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/s/ James R. Schlesinger

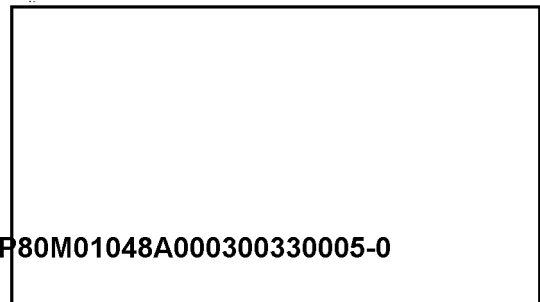
James R. Schlesinger
Director

Attachments

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SUMMARY

THE PROBLEM

Soviet Influence in Iraq and Southern Arabia

Soviet military support to Iraq and PDRY, in progress for the past several years, has visibly deepened since mid-1972. Iraq is now the principal Soviet client in the Middle East. Its status as such has been formalized in the Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Treaty of July 1972 and tangibly reflected in the more recent Soviet deliveries to Iraq of modern and sophisticated arms.

When PDRY, the only Soviet foothold in the strategic southern Arabian Peninsula, came in October 1972 under the increased pressure of raiding by Saudi-financed Yemeni tribesmen and activist NUF exiles, this time supported and participated in by elements of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) army, the Soviets swiftly increased the quantity and quality of their aid to this client state. Commencing in October,

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ATTACHMENT C

SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ AND SOUTHERN ARABIA:
A SITUATION REPORT

While the Soviet Union had long supported Iraq and, more recently, the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), its involvement with these radical Arab states has visibly deepened since mid-1972. In the case of Iraq, this deepening over an extended period was formalized by the signing of a Soviet-Iraqi Friendship Treaty in July 1972 -- at a time when the Egyptian expulsion of Soviet military advisors was already in full swing. The treaty did not itself cause, but it was certainly consistent with, the previously-planned improvement of the Iraqi armed forces' weapons inventory through provision of more modern and sophisticated Soviet arms such as MIG-21 aircraft, MI-6 cargo and troop-carrying helicopters, T-62 tanks, Komar missile boats, and SAM 2 and 3 systems. The total to date of more than \$1 billion in military aid to Iraq represents, apart from Egypt, the Soviet Union's largest such investment in the Middle East, and the approximately 600 military advisors now assigned to Iraq constitute the largest such Soviet contingent in the Arab World. With the recent cooling in Soviet-Egyptian relations, Iraq is now the principal Soviet client in the Middle East and appears virtually certain to remain so for the foreseeable future.

Immediate, external pressures seem to have played a larger role in increasing Soviet involvement with PDRY since mid-1972 than was the case with Iraq. Given the Soviet Union's attenuating relations with the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and its inability to date to establish a presence anywhere else on the Arabian Peninsula except Kuwait, the deteriorating position of the leftist National Front (NF) regime in Aden posed not only an immediate threat to the strategic Soviet foothold in the southern peninsula facilitated by that regime's control over PDRY and its active hostility toward its conservative neighbors -- the YAR, Saudi Arabia, and the Sultanate of Oman -- but also a threat against which decisive Soviet action could, at relatively modest cost, rapidly erect an effective defense. The Soviets did in fact so act when, in October 1972, the chronic Saudi-financed raiding forays of both YAR tribesmen and activist PDRY exiles in the YAR expanded, albeit only briefly, into a more serious campaign supported and participated in by elements of the YAR regular army, which also seized Kamaran Island, claimed by PDRY. The increasing success of the Sultan

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As to the purposes underlying Soviet involvement with Iraq and PDRY, Soviet policy is blended of both long range objectives and the immediately reactive factors which affect or even block effective pursuit of these objectives. The latter factors, arising from opportunities or setbacks which the Soviets did not foresee or cannot directly prevent, will necessarily alter the pace and tactics of the Soviet program for achieving their long range objectives, or may, under certain circumstances, exert more basic and lasting impact on the Soviets' definition of these very objectives themselves. For example, the Soviets may well not have fully foreseen and certainly could not have prevented the increasingly anti-Soviet policies of the Egyptian Government during this period, but when these became unmistakably clear with the Egyptian decision to expel Soviet advisors, the value and importance to the Soviet Union of Iraq increased overnight. Another characteristic of Soviet foreign policy is its frequent tendency to copper bets, to put primary effort on backing one especially promising horse, while at the same time making a contingency investment in a competing one. In the Arab world, for example, the Soviets have long placed primary stress on improving their relations with established Arab governments, but they concurrently have also sought to maintain and improve their ties with the Palestinian fedayeen movement, even though it is anathema to many of those same governments. Finally, there is the defensive aspect of Soviet policy, with its considerations of big power prestige which impel the Soviets to support those clients in whom it has already invested heavily. Just as this was a key factor in Soviet support of PDRY during the period, so, too, is it in Soviet support of Iraq's efforts to come to satisfactory terms with the restive Kurdish movement led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani, whether by pressuring Barzani to join in a Ba'athi-dominated National Front through which the Kurds could be effectively neutralized as a dissident force in Iraq, or, should this fail, by assisting direct Iraqi military action against the Kurdish irregular forces. The upgrading of the Iraqi arms inventory, coupled with increased Soviet training of Iraqi airborne forces, clearly has direct relevance to the improvement of Iraqi military capabilities against the Kurds.

Yet, there assuredly are fundamental elements of consistent long range purpose in Soviet policies in the Middle East, especially as these pertain specifically to Iraq and PDRY. These can be defined as the Soviet goals of achieving paramount influence in areas of critical strategic importance and the reduction or

elimination of the official, and especially military presence of the Soviet Union's chief competitors in the area as a whole. With respect to Iraq, the Soviets have sought, and with some success, to improve their relations with Iran, but recognize realistically that there are and will remain very distinct limits to the Shah's willingness to collaborate with them. Soviet support to Iraq accordingly has its basic, long-term anti-Iranian facet, as well as its facet of Iraqi potential for subversion against the conservative, major oil-producing countries in the area. In both these facets, the Soviets can support and increase area trends ultimately detrimental to the interests of major rivals, chiefly those of the US, but also those of Western European countries and Japan. Soviet policy in the southern portion of the Arabian Peninsula is fully complementary to that in Iraq. Iraq affords the Soviets secure entree to the northern Persian Gulf, especially through the Soviets' recently-acquired naval base rights at Umm Qasr. PDRY affords the Soviets the potential for ultimate control over the mouth of the Gulf through overthrow of the conservative, pro-West government of Oman by the PDRY-supported Dhufar rebels of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG), coupled with subversion by Iraqi-supported PFLOAG elements working in and against all the conservative Arab governments along the western shore of the Gulf -- Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the states of the Union of Arab Emirates (UAE). PDRY also affords the Soviets the potential for ultimate control over the mouth of the Red Sea in combination with their influence in Somalia, where Soviet activity has been steadily on the increase. Finally, the Soviets clearly appreciate in PDRY its potential for both military action and subversion against the YAR (which they deem increasingly a mere client of Saudi Arabia and, by extension, of the US) and, in time, against Saudi Arabia itself. To the extent the Soviets continue to strengthen their presence and influence in Iraq, PDRY, and Somalia, they also enhance their capability to exert pressure on all riparian states of both the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, including Israel and Jordan.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

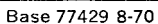
THE REBELLION IN OMAN: STATUS REPORT

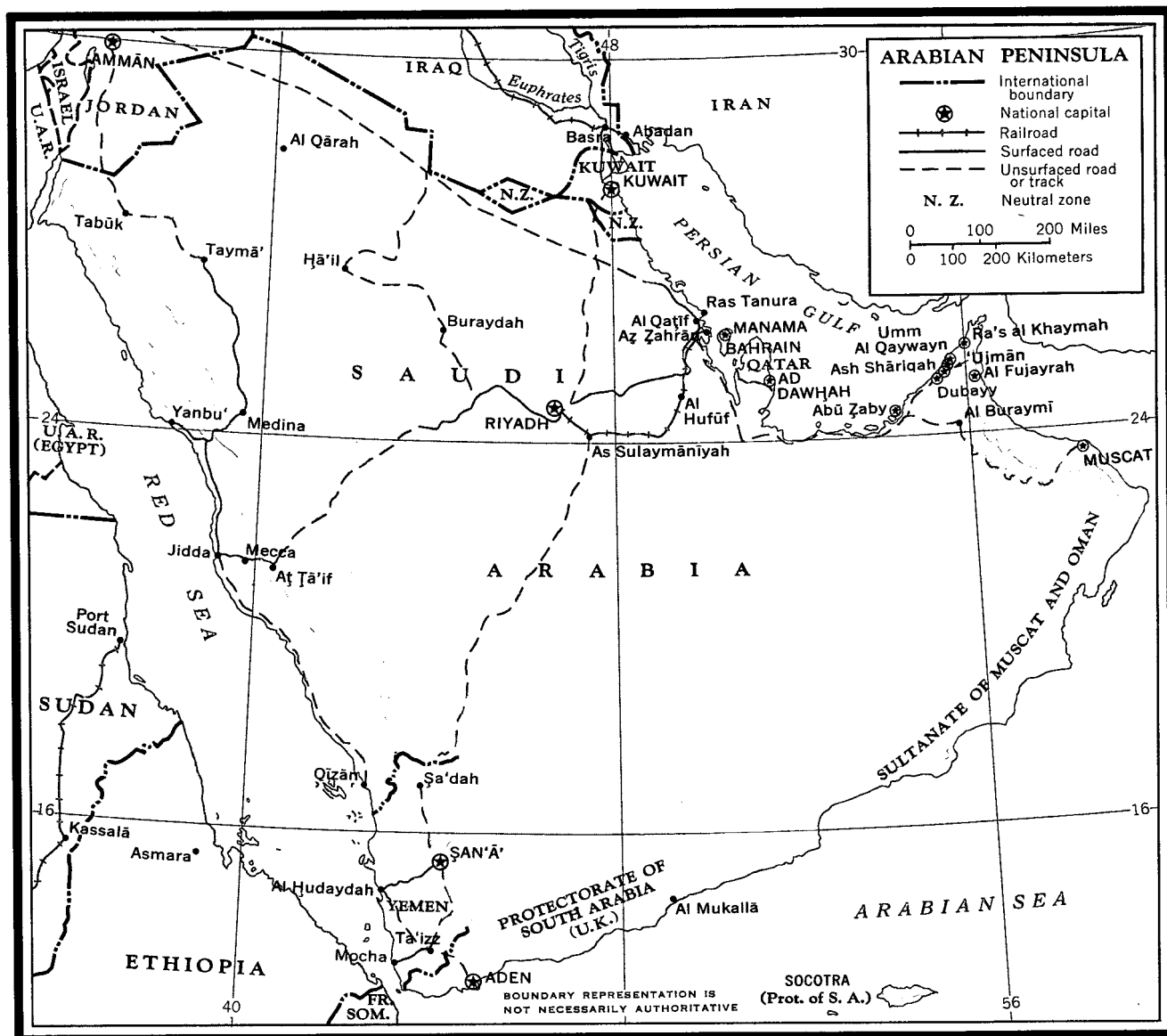
Quick foreign assistance has relieved the immediate threat to an important government position in Dhufar Province, but action around the position may signal an increase in the tempo of the guerrilla rebellion in Dhufar, Oman's westernmost province. The action began in early February, when forces of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) increased pressure on a 500-man garrison at the government Station Mainbrace, which was established last spring deep in enemy-held territory with the idea of cutting off guerrilla supply lines from neighboring PDRY.

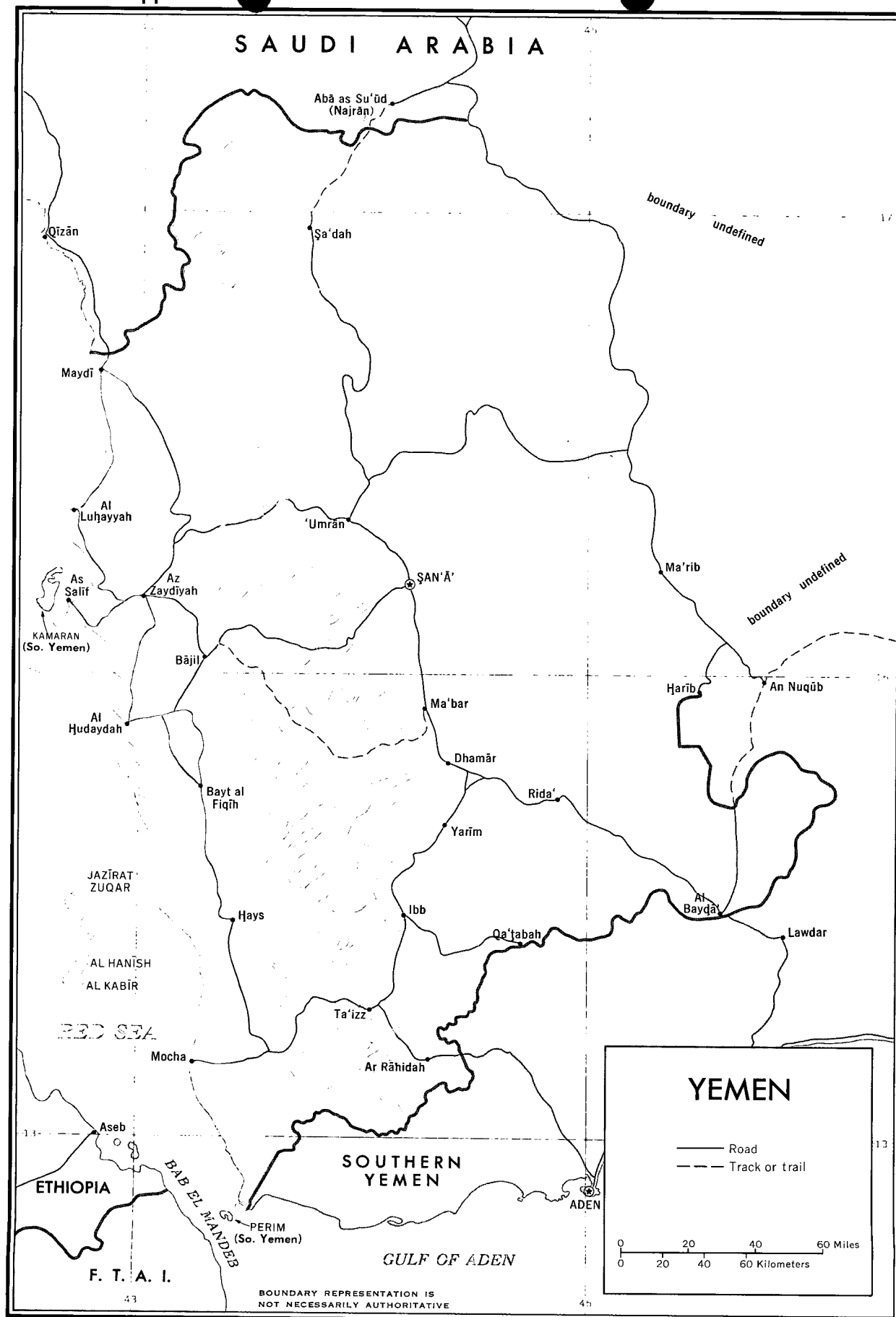


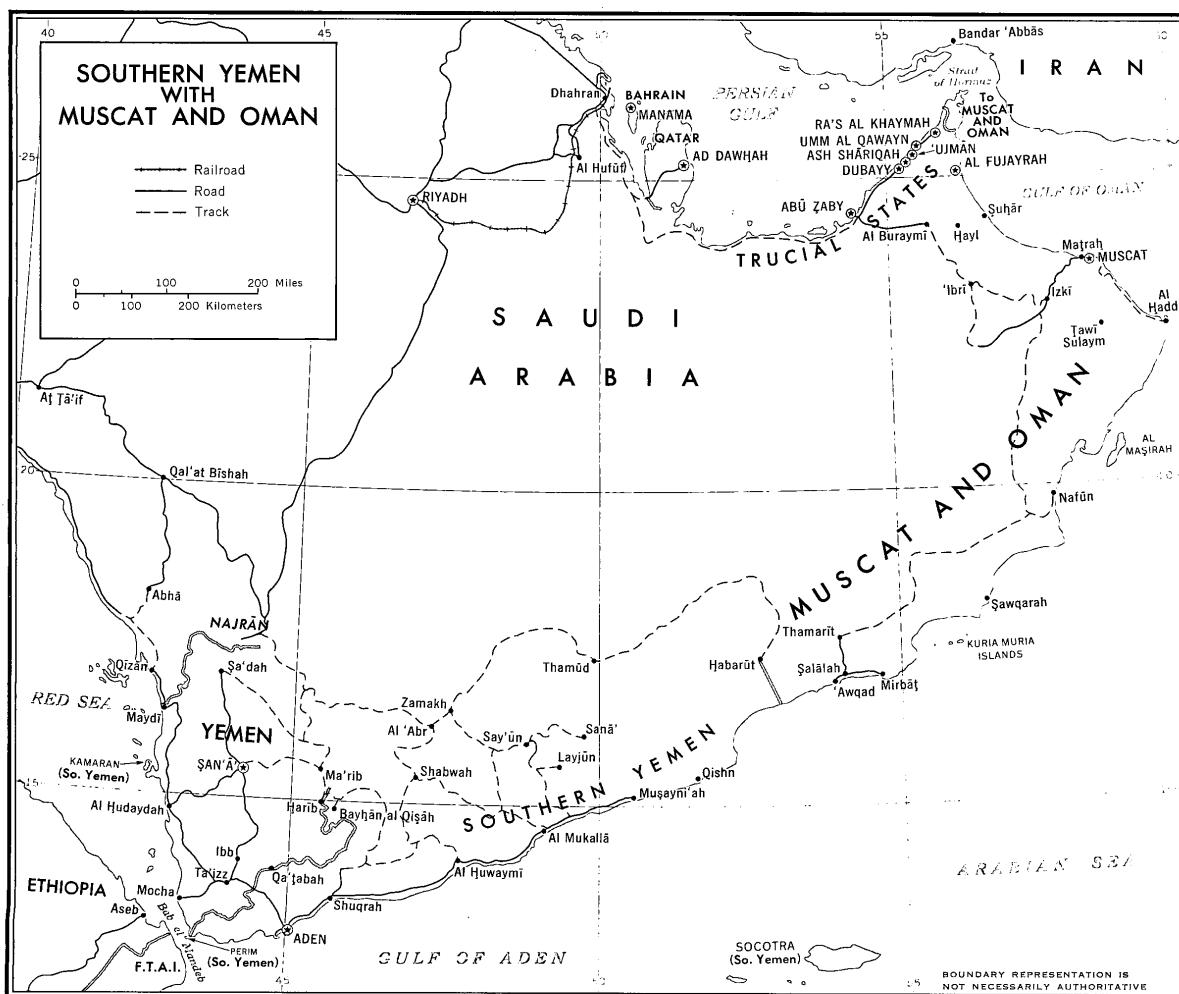
The PFLOAG guerrillas may be receiving increased aid from PDRY, which has for several years been their chief source of both moral and material assistance. The guerrillas would be hard put to sustain any serious offensive without substantial aid from their PDRY allies. The PDRY Government funnels Soviet arms to the guerrillas, and some of the increased Soviet deliveries to PDRY in 1972 have probably found their way to the Dhufar front.

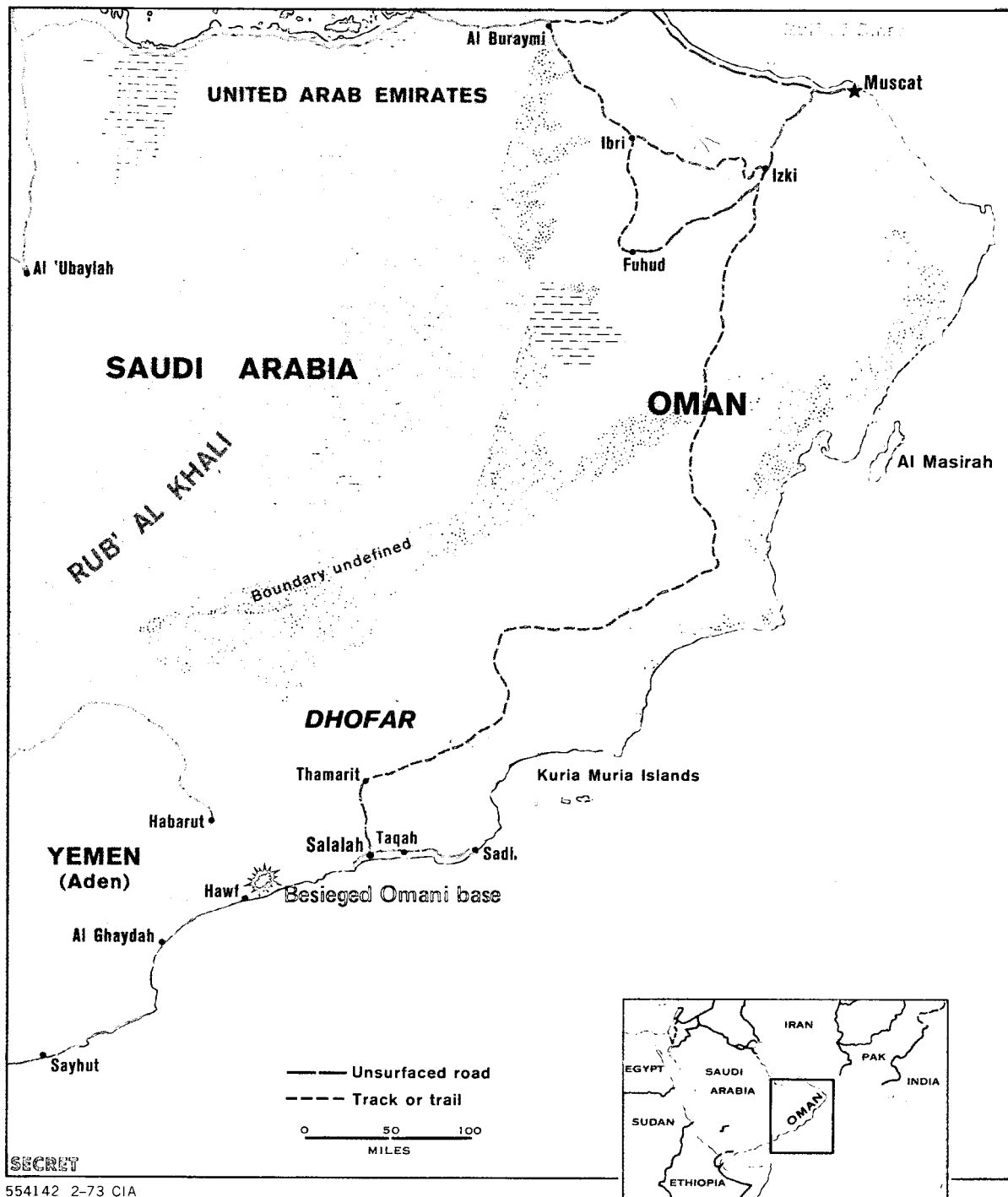
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